

# MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NELIGH, NEBRASKA

February 10, 2026

The regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Neligh was held at the City Council Chambers on February 10, 2026 at 7:00 PM. Present were Mayor Joe Hartz and Council Members Ted Hughes: Present, Steph Lundgren: Present, Leonard Miller: Present, Tyler Pedersen: Absent. Also in attendance were City Attorney James McNally, City Supt. Dan Donaldson, Economic Development Director Lauren Sheridan, City Clerk Danielle Klabenes, Police Chief Logan Lawson, News Reporter Kelli Garcia, Librarian Director Amy Baker, Assistant Librarian Mary Klinetobe, Library Board member Laurel Miller, and Lee Wilkinson. Notice of this meeting was given in advance thereof by publication in the Antelope County News on February 4, 2026. Notice of this meeting was given to the mayor and all members of the Council and a copy of their acknowledgment of receipt of notice and the agenda is attached to the minutes. Availability of the agenda was communicated in the advance notice and in the notice to the Council of this meeting. Mayor Hartz offered a prayer before opening the meeting. All proceedings thereafter shown were taken while the convened meeting was open to the attendance of the public. Mayor Hartz presided over the meeting and noted that a copy of the Open Meetings Law, located on the east wall of the City Council Chambers, was available to the public. City Clerk Danielle Klabenes recorded the minutes. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

## APPROVAL OF MINUTES

*Council member Hughes moved to approve the January 13th regular meeting minutes as presented.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Leonard Miller: Abstain, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 2, Nay: 0, Absent: 1, Abstain: 1. Motion Carried.

## TREASURER REPORT

Clerk Klabenes reported a reimbursement from the State Revolving Fund (SRF) of \$224,000 for the water project that was received the prior week and would be reflected in the February report next month. She reported that the City of Neligh had received notice of award of the Land Water & Conservation Fund grant of \$210,000 for four Riverside and Russell Park projects for possible fall 2026 or spring 2027 construction. She reported that the city had received the ACE membership distribution of \$6,561 in February which was used for the CodeRed notification system. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve the January 2026 treasurer's report as presented.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

Clerk Klabenes reported Southwest Power Pool issued a notice based on Day Ahead estimated charges and the January cold weather snap that created a cure notice for the city to meet with compliance of a transfer of funds within 2 days. She reported that after the funds transfer went through, that Southwest Power Pool had detected an error in the billing and the city was not subject to the cure notice after all and the funds would be refunded. *Council member Lundgren moved to ratify the city clerk's action for transfer of funds to Southwest Power Pool on February 6th for \$97,773 for the cure notice issued on February 4, 2026.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

## PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments were heard.

## LIBRARY FOUNDATION FUNDRAISER

Mary Klinetobe reported on a fundraiser that the Library Foundation was planning for the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United States. She reported the public art, and patriotic fundraiser would feature a mosaic picture of a bald eagle in front of the American flag. She reported the finished artwork would be displayed on an approximate 8 foot by 12-foot mural of over 200 tiles measuring 4 inches by 4 inches each painted by members of the community. She reported residents of Antelope County communities could purchase tiles to paint which would slide into aluminum rails. She reported businesses could purchase a surrounding tile for placement along the border of the mosaic picture. She reported she would like the finished artwork to be mounted on the north side of the Grandstands and positioned high enough to not be touched or tampered with. City Supt. Donaldson suggested placing a light on the artwork and city personnel could help install it. *Council member Hughes moved to approve the Library Foundation fundraiser for a patriotic mosaic mural and approve the attachment to the Riverside Park Grandstands.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Ted Hughes: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

## SEMI-ANNUAL LIBRARY REPORT

Librarian Director Amy Baker reported on the library's place for study, children's programs, technological assistance, and access. She reported the library earned the Gold Star Status in 2025 for excellence in service and operations. She reported grant funding from the Carnegie Library of \$10,000 was awarded to the Library Foundation. She reported the library's collection now included 21,635 books, served 2,622 cardholders, over

3,200 computer sessions, offered 286 children and adult programs. She reported a new handicapped accessible door system, and a new window replacement was coming. She thanked the City Council for continued support, the city administration and staff, the Library Board, Library staff, Friends of the Library, the Library Foundation, Antelope County, and all Library patrons collectively making the library a cornerstone of the community. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve the semi-annual library report as presented.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

#### **PROCLAMATION FOR MARCH GAMBLING AWARENESS**

Mayor Joe Hartz read a proclamation to provide awareness that problem gambling exists, not for the city or council to be for or against gambling, but to advocate for services available to problem gamblers and their families. The mayor proclaimed March as Gambling Awareness month. No action was taken.

#### **DIAL-A-RIDE PUBLIC TRANSIT 2026 TITLE VI PLAN**

Clerk Klabenos reported the transit agency is required to update the Title VI plan every 3 years stating the business will not discriminate on race, color, or national origin. She reported no changes from the 2023 plan. *Council member Hughes moved to approve the 2026 Dial A Ride Public Transit Title VI updated plan as presented.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

#### **CITY SALES TAX TO 1.5% FOR PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS**

Discussion was held to consider an increase in city sales tax for street improvements by placing the question on the November 2026 election ballot. Discussion was held to consider more inventive ways to educate the public on the benefits that sales tax could do for street improvements. Council Member Lundgren offered to help with a marketing plan. Discussion was held for the December community survey results showing that the citizens wanted street improvements. Discussion was held that financing a street project is only through a bond which is either supported by increasing property taxes or assessed to property owners and an increase in sales tax would provide financing for street improvements without an increase to property taxes. Discussion from the audience offered comments to consider the increase in sales tax to be designated to streets improvements only instead of public improvements, and to note the community pride to keep up with other towns in the county already at a 1.5% city sales tax. *Council member Lundgren moved to authorize and direct the City Attorney to prepare the documents for a fall election to increase the city sales tax from 1% to 1.5% for street improvements on the November 2026 ballot.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

#### **ORDINANCE NO 668 SETTING THE TIMEFRAME TO CONDUCT AND COMPLETE DEMOLITION**

City Attorney Jim McNally reported the proposed ordinance provided for a reduced time frame to complete a demolition from an original 6 months to the proposed 60 days. *Council member Lundgren introduced and moved for passage Ordinance 668 entitled as follows:*

*AN ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF NELIGH, ANTELOPE COUNTY, NEBRASKA, AMENDING SECTION 8-301 OF THE REVISED ORDINANCES OF THE CITY; REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES OR PARTS OF ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE.*

*And moved that the statutory rule requiring reading on three different times be suspended.* Council Member Miller seconded the motion to suspend the rules and upon roll call vote on the motion, the following Council Members voted Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea. Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. The motion to suspend the rules was adopted by three-fourths of the Council and the statutory rule was declared suspended for consideration of said ordinance.

Said ordinance was then read by title and thereafter, *Council member Hughes moved for final passage of the ordinance,* which motion was seconded by Council member Lundgren. The mayor then stated the question, "Shall Ordinance No. 668 be passed and adopted?" Upon roll call vote, the following Council Members voted Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea. Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. The passage and adoption of said ordinance, having been concurred in by three-fourths of all members of the City Council, the Mayor declared the ordinance was adopted and approved of the same and affixed his signature thereto and ordered the City Clerk to publish said ordinance one time as prescribed by law.

#### **APPOINTMENTS**

Mayor Hartz recommended the new appointment of Gus Leigh to the Board of Adjustment to fill an unexpired term to June 2028. The mayor also recommended the new appointment of Marty Beyer to the Citizens Advisory Review Committee to fill an unexpired term to June 2028. The mayor thanked Jack Green for serving on the Board of Adjustment and as the Chairman since July 1998 for a term of 27 1/2 years. The mayor thanked Stephanie Keetle for serving on the Citizens Advisory Review Committee. *Council member Lundgren moved to*

*approve the appointments as presented and thank both outgoing members for serving on their respective boards.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

#### **NEW MOON COMMUNITY THEATER BIDS FOR INTERIOR DEMO**

Theater Liaison Lundgren reported that City Supt. Donaldson had worked with the Theater Board President Karmen Hughes for a scope of work for the interior demo of the theater for the Gilcrest grant and thanked City Supt. Donaldson for his work. City Supt. Donaldson reported he had interest from local contractors in submitting sealed bids for the interior demolition grant. He reported that he estimated that the grant will cover the labor-intensive project. Clerk Klabenes reported on the timeline to complete the project and requested a bid letting date for the March meeting. *Council member Hughes moved to authorize advertising for contractor bids for the New Moon Community Theater interior demo and set a bid letting date of March 10th at 7:00PM.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

#### **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR REPORT**

The Economic Development Director reported an update on the 6-plex was slow but forward progress. City Supt. Donaldson reported the top 3 apartment units were painted, flooring would be installed in the upcoming weekend, then cabinets would be installed, drywall in bottom apartments was finishing, and the HVAC and electric was done. Discussion was held that no updated correspondence on parking or a street survey had come through. She shared a report on the December community survey results for each category with citizen comments including how people preferred to receive information with social media. Discussion noted that the survey responses were obtained from 114 participants and using a balance of social media, website and newspaper forums would increase coverage of sharing the results and providing information on topics listed in the survey. The Director reported that the Historic Preservation Commission had met earlier that day in a partnership with the local school Civics class to create historical location videos. She reported she had sent a letter of opposition to a legislative bill that proposed ending the historic preservation tax credits. The Director reported that Clearwater projects included coordination with public works on grants, updating the website, and a showcase community nomination. Discussion was held to allow time to prepare, consider and act on an agreement or contract change for all boards involved. *Council member Hughes moved to approve the January Economic Development report as presented.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

#### **MARKET RATE HOUSING REVOLVING LOAN**

The Director reported she had received a loan application for a market rate loan, but without a quorum for the LB840 Loan Review Committee to meet to review the financial and background checks, the application would come forward at the March meeting. The matter was tabled. No action was taken.

#### **POLICE REPORT**

Chief Lawson reported it is common to receive multiple welfare checks on family or friends in January when the weather is cold and all calls came with positive endings. He reported the previous month also saw accidents with road conditions, warrant arrests and traffic stops. He reported the busiest part of January included two equipment projects in the same week with a new body camera and in-car camera systems installed with a noticeable big improvement of more reliability, user friendly, and easier to provide information to authorities. He reported installation began on the license plate readers. He reported the readers allowed permission to partner with other agencies and multiplied the police force size making it easier to find the cars that are wanted for various reasons. He reported that January's training included Sergeant Miller and Officer Schroeder attended a special needs training in emergency situations hosted by the Neligh rescue squad. He reported Officer Schroeder held his first presentation at junior high and high school on alcohol awareness with a 1 on 1 basketball contest wearing the drunk goggles to demonstrate impaired cognitive and physical abilities. *Council member Hughes moved to approve the January Police report as presented.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Ted Hughes: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

The Chief of Police reported he had conducted a 6-month review with Officer Schroeder following Schroeder's 6-month anniversary after attaining certification. He recommended a salary increase to \$55,120 as budgeted. *Council member Lundgren moved to to approve a salary increase for Officer Schroeder following a 6-month certified officer review to \$55,120 salary effective February 21st.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Leonard Miller: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

#### **CITY SUPT. & ELECTRIC REPORT**

City Supt. Donaldson reported Street personnel were grading roads in January and February in absence of snow this winter. He reported he placed 22 garage doors among all city buildings on a maintenance program to

service with annual checks. He reported seasonal applications for pool employees will begin and city personnel were trimming trees in Fred Penn and Riverside Parks. He reported he had attended the Fair Board meeting with a compiled materials list on the Grandstand repairs and labor estimate of about \$24-25,000 according to the structural engineers' recommendations. He reported that the Fair Board will consider and review the list and city staff could help with facial repairs and seats. He reported the work could be done in stages. The City Supt. reported he had been in contact with the Nebraska State Historic Director on the state submission of an abandoned and unused property to a committee for the property by the upper bypass. He reported he anticipated an update in April for a possible deed of property to the city to proceed with bypass clean out that would benefit both the state and the city. He reported a 6-foot John D Neligh bronze statue on a 3-foot base was going to be presented on July 5<sup>th</sup>, and he was working with the site director for placement of the statue. He reported the State Historical Society would be requesting that the city cover the insurance and maintenance on the statue placed on state property. He reported no issues on the water and sewer systems. He reported the first load of cardboard weighed 17 tons for 36 bales received \$600 but saved \$1,175 in land fill costs. Discussion was held to educate the public on why solid waste rates are currently at \$74 per ton at the landfill compared to 2 years ago at \$54/ton and include this information in the monthly newsletter. The Supt. reported the city had generated 3 times last month, had already generated 3 times in February. He reported electric personnel were looking at a way to do without a large transformer that supplies power to the east section of town, and JEO was looking at the possibility of upgrading smaller transformers and not using the larger East transformer that requires a crane to replace. Discussion was held for conducting residential tree trimming. *Council member Hughes moved to approve the City Supt. report as presented.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

*Council member Lundgren moved to begin advertising for summer pool employees in February.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

City Supt. Donaldson reported a tire amnesty was scheduled for April 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>. Economic Development Director Sheridan reported a Spring Community Shred Day was scheduled for April 15<sup>th</sup>. *Council member Lundgren moved to approve the Spring community cleanup weekend of April 25th & 26th with rain dates of May 2nd & 3rd and waiving the compactor fees on Saturday, April 25th for Neligh residents only.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

Mayor Hartz shared an article on city personnel and city council members wanting to do provide for the public, are held to financial, time and labor constraints, and try to fix, accomplish, and achieve something in our community. The mayor invited the public to stop at city hall for a copy of the article.

## **NEW MOON THEATER REPORT**

Theater Liaison Lundgren reported that the bulk of recent work focused on getting ready for interior demo. She reported the Board President Karmen Hughes had stopped by with a class earlier that day to see the theater and mark items that were not to be demolished or thrown away such as the auditorium doors with so much character. She reported mementos and artifacts would be kept upstairs. She reported a fundraiser was held the previous night at the American Legion for a Paint and Sip Galentine's event. She reported events like this that raised funds and raised awareness about the theater. She reported the theater was so fortunate to have a Sherwood grant to run promotional events throughout the year. She thanked Joyce Cameron of the Legion for partnering and holding the event. Lundgren reported continuing work with the grant writer to aggressively apply for the larger grants. *Council member Hughes moved to approve the New Moon Theater Liaison report as presented.* Seconded by Miller. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Ted Hughes: Yea, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

## **APPROVAL OF BILLS**

The Blackstrap invoices will be placed on the March agenda due to a lack of majority of the city council since Council Member Hughes would have to abstain due to a conflict of interest.

*Council member Lundgren moved to approve the current claims except for the Blackstrap invoices and Pay Application #14 Final to Rutjens Construction for \$184,790.22 for all water and sewer projects including a revision to Change Order 4 of \$15,794.06 and Change Order 5 of \$163,835.00.* Seconded by Hughes. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried.

There being no further business to conduct, *Council member Miller moved to adjourn.* Seconded by Lundgren. Roll call votes in favor were Tyler Pedersen: Absent, Steph Lundgren: Yea, Ted Hughes: Yea, Leonard Miller: Yea Yea: 3, Nay: 0, Absent: 1. Motion Carried. Time adjourned 8:35pm.

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Joe Hartz, Mayor

ATTEST

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Danielle Klabenes, City Clerk

### **CERTIFICATION**

I, the undersigned, City Clerk of the City of Neligh, Nebraska, hereby certify that on February 10, 2026; that all of the subjects included in the foregoing proceedings were contained in the agenda for the meeting, kept continually current and readily available for public inspection at the office of the City Clerk; that such agenda items were sufficiently descriptive to give the public reasonable notice of the matters to be considered at the meeting; that such subjects were contained in said agenda for at least twenty-four hours prior to said meeting; that at least one copy of all reproducible material discussed at the meeting was available for public inspection at least twenty-four hours before the meeting; that the said minutes from which the foregoing proceedings have been extracted were in written form and available for public inspection within ten working days and prior to the next convened meeting of said body; that all news media requesting notification concerning meetings of said body were provided advance notification of the time and place of said meeting and the subjects to be discussed at said meeting; and that a current copy of the Nebraska Open Meetings Act was available and accessible to members of the public, posted during such meeting in the room in which such meeting was held.

(SEAL)

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City Clerk